

HOUSE RESOLUTION 141

By Gilmore

A RESOLUTION to recognize and honor Belmont University's esteemed athletic programs and accomplished alumni.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable institutions of higher education that, through the magnificent exploits of its athletic programs and accomplished alumni, bring honor to this great State; and

WHEREAS, Belmont University is one such institution that continues a long tradition of academic, artistic, and athletic excellence; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to accolades, Belmont University has recently been on the receiving end of much attention due to the outstanding success of its overall athletic accomplishments, including the Men's and Women's Basketball Teams, as well as the star-studded achievements of two of its famous alumni, Fox Network's *American Idol* contestant Melinda Doolittle and Miss USA 2007 Rachel Smith; and

WHEREAS, in the arena of sports, the Belmont Bruins men's basketball team earned their second consecutive NCAA Tournament berth as they captured the Atlantic Sun Championship with a 94-67 victory over number one seed and conference host East Tennessee State University, marking the second straight year number two seed Belmont defeated the number one seed in the championship game; and

WHEREAS, led by twenty-one year veteran Head Coach Rick Byrd who celebrated his 500th win this season, the Bruins ended their exemplary season with twenty-three wins, the most in one season since the team jumped to NCAA Division I in 1996; and

WHEREAS, the Bruins ranked in the top ten percent in the NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate and is one of only six Division I men's basketball teams to make the APR Top Ten and make the NCAA Tournament in both the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 seasons; and

WHEREAS, the glorious achievements of the men's basketball program is equaled to that of the women's basketball program; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Bruins, under the able leadership of Head Coach Tony Cross, earned their first NCAA Tournament berth as they captured their first Atlantic Sun Championship with a 69-57 victory over third-seeded East Tennessee State University; they ended their season with twenty-five wins, the most for the women's program since the team joined the NCAA Division I ranks in 1996; and

WHEREAS, Coach Tony Cross was named the Atlantic Sun Coach of the Year for the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 seasons and is the winningest coach in the Atlantic Sun with a record of 497-211; and

WHEREAS, Belmont University's student athletes are the five-time consecutive recipients of the Atlantic Sun Conference All-Academic Trophy for having the highest percentage of student athletes with a GPA of 3.0 or higher; and

WHEREAS, the Belmont University men's cross country team, women's cross country team, and volleyball team claimed the 2006 Atlantic Sun Conference Championship, with the volleyball team appearing in the NCAA Tournament; and

WHEREAS, the Belmont University men's and women's cross country teams are National Academic Award recipients; the men's and women's tennis teams and the men's soccer team are ranked in the top ten percent in the NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate; and

WHEREAS, in the artistic arena, Belmont University, where the famed front-runner on *American Idol* Melinda Doolittle received her bachelor's degree in music, is renowned for its world-class School of Music; and

WHEREAS, after a competitive audition process, Ms. Doolittle was selected to perform in the 1999 Commercial Music Showcase, one of the university's most highly regarded productions; and

WHEREAS, representing her hometown of Brentwood and Belmont University with talent and distinction, Ms. Doolittle is one of six remaining contestants in the top rated show, which receives a nationwide audience of thirty million viewers per week; and

WHEREAS, another alumna who represents Belmont University with talent and distinction is Rachel Smith, who graduated from the university Magna Cum Laude with a major in journalism in 2006; she realized her journalistic passions through her work as managing editor of *The Belmont Vision* and as an intern for eight months in Chicago with Oprah Winfrey's Harpo Productions; and

WHEREAS, Rachel Smith lent her time and talents to the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls in South Africa; and

WHEREAS, representing her hometown of Clarksville, Belmont University, and the state of Tennessee with beauty, grace, and dignity, Ms. Smith was crowned as both Miss Tennessee USA and Miss USA 2007; and

WHEREAS, Belmont University's long tradition of academic, athletic, and artistic excellence, as well as the outstanding achievements of its alumni, are clearly deserving of the respect, admiration, and commendation of this legislative body; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby honor the exemplary achievements of Belmont University's programs, athletic teams, and alumni, recognizing the university as an institution of higher education dedicated to the pursuit of excellence.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.